

HOBBIES

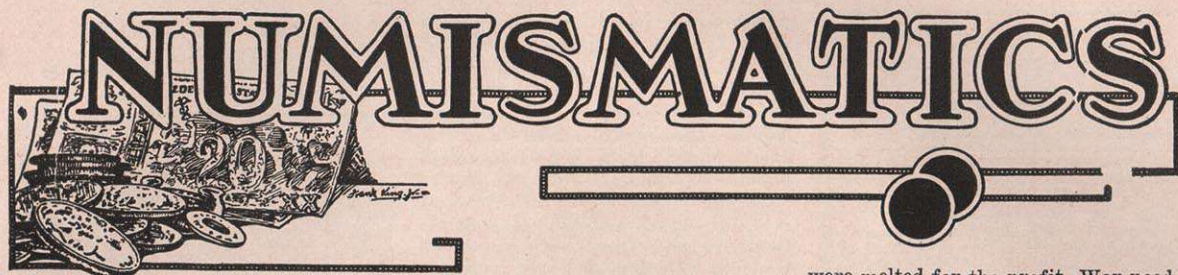
September, 1943

25c

THE MAGAZINE FOR COLLECTORS

OLD TOOTHPICK HOLDERS
(See Glass and China Department)





NUMISMATIC THOUGHTS

By FRANK C. ROSS

BEAUTY IS AS BEAUTY VIEWED

The beauty of a coin depends on the artistic taste of the viewer. Occasionally one hears a remark about the beauty of our recently minted coins and the lack of beauty in our earlier ones; this is a mistaken estimate. The transition from our early unadorned coins to the present fancifully decorated ones was not an instance of "from the ridiculous to the sublime," but merely a change in type of beauty. Who will say that the beauty-parlored glamorers of today are more beautiful than the rosy cheeked, long haired girls of yesterday. Whistler's Mother is devoid of all artistic doo-dads, yet, symbolizing motherhood as it does, it is considered one of the world's beauty masterpieces. The beauty of a coin should be judged by its symbolism, not its "dress." The coins of Mexico with their loathsome (to us) snake are beautiful to the Mexicans.

Our two-cent piece is very plain, no curly-cues, yet it is one of our most beautiful coins; the figures, the lettering, the arrangement of words on the coin are so perfectly blended that its very plainness makes for its beauty. And the same may apply to our dainty little silver three-cents and half-dime. Even our old-fashioned halves and dollars, depicting fearless Liberty with her unkempt hair and the oddly designed eagle, are plain to a degree, yet their symbolic background beautifies them. Our crowded commemorative halves are not always spoken of as beauties, but they are certainly commemoratively beautiful. Beauty on coins is like beauty in everything else, a matter of taste of the viewer.

NICOTINE CURRENCY

Money is as money serves. We use paper bills and metal discs because they best serve our purpose. All "odd" money of the long ago is not, as most

suppose, obsolete. This global war with its ever changing war maps, daily news, and hourly broadcasts is changing the community of nations from a far-flung world into a closely-knitted neighborhood, and we are becoming better acquainted with our neighbors' "odd monies". There is no odder to us than ours is to them. Probably the most surprising to us is the present wide use of what we have considered obsolete, tobacco currency, a throw-back to the tobacco "coinage" of the early Virginia planters. The Science Digest tells us: "The Australian Army has asked the Food Distribution Administration to send over 20 to 30 tons a month of a particular kind of dark twist tobacco, which has long been chewed by natives of New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and New Britain and also used for money. The "Aussies" want the tobacco to bargain with South Sea Islanders. Unlike the conventional loop of home chewers, the tobacco is twisted like rope and cut in seven-inch lengths which are pressure flattened into sticks one-fourth an inch wide."

THE NEW ERA

The use of three different metals, copper, nickel and silver in our small change is more from custom than necessity. As none of them are worth their weight in metal, mere tokens, they could well be made, all of them, of the same metal, and at a much less expense. The silver coins are not worth their face value because of the silver in them, but because the government O. K's them, so why use silver? Coins evolved from weights, and were worth their weight, and this continued down through the years. At the establishment of our Mint, and for many years after, our coins were worth their weight; if the amount of silver in a coin was changed it was so designated on the coin by an arrow at side of date. If the bullion price of silver changed and coins were worth more as bullion than as currency they

were melted for the profit. War needs have brought a new era in our coinage with its steel pennies and silver nickels, and after the war the government might find it expedient to make all of our "small change" of the same metal, possibly steel. While the coins would all look alike, the different denominations could be easily distinguished by their different sizes or shapes, something on the order of our state tax tokens. The Missouri 1 and 5 mill zinc tax tokens are of the same size but readily distinguished even in the dark by the round hole in the center of the five-mill token. Why use 25 cents worth of silver in making a 50-cent piece, and only one cent (or less) of paper in a \$1,000 bill. The after the war New Era will bring us many changes, among which may be a new type of coins.

COLLECTINGLY

"Money in thy purse will ever be in fashion."

It is easier to start a youngster on the right path than to teach an old dog new tricks! A reader writes: "In the long run, more will be accomplished for numismatics by moulding a group of boys into earnest collectors than will be gained trying to convert a few old heads with a handful of cents and big ideas of wealth from them." Beauty is as behaves; the recent, beautifully designed coins haven't the numismatic value of the older, less beautiful ones. The monetary term Guinea is neither fowl nor animal but is taken from Guinea, in Africa, from whence came the gold for the minting of the coin. The 13 stars on so many of our coins symbolize the original 13 states; leaving them off does not mean a slight, for the legend E Pluribus Unum has 13 letters. For many years natives of New Guinea, Solomon Isles and New Britain have used dark twist chewing tobacco as money. Don't worry about imperfect coins; numismatics, like mankind, "is helped in its progress almost as much by the study of imperfection as by the contemplation of perfection." Tokens issued during the Civil War are also known as copper heads. The Indian appears on six of our commemorative coins. On the 1935 Hudson commemorative half-dollar Neptune is riding backward on a dolphin. This at first seems odd, but when you notice he has a mermaid as

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a back-seat driver it is easily understood. It is the beginning, middle, or the end of a beautiful romance; perhaps Neptune was "looking forward" as well as backward. A Lisbon item refutes the many statements that American gold coins do not exist except in coin collections: "in the rua Aurea, nicknamed the "rau d'Oro," street of gold, the windows of the exchange offices are still filled with American 20-dollar gold pieces. There were approximately 45 differently designed half-dollars, commemoratives and regulars, issued by our Mints during a 21 year period, 1915-1936. Quite a number of designs for such a short period.

oOo

Mint officials say that on account of lack of capacity due to the large amount of regular currency there will be no proofs struck during 1943, and probably none for the duration.

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Coins at Auction

Selections from M. H. Bolender's 153rd auction of rare coins and paper money which was held on June 23.

1692 triple crown of Genoa, fine, \$16.25. 1623 Gluckstadt silver crown, fine, \$12.25. 1797 U. S. silver dollar, 7 stars before bust, fine, \$12.75. 1794 silver dollar, very good, \$200.00. 1838 silver dollar, brill., proof, \$350.00. 1796 quarter, very good, \$20.50. 1804 quarter, very good, \$16.00. 1806 quarter, uncirculated, \$17.00. 1801 U. S. dime, very good, \$15.00. 1796 half-dime, ex. fine, \$33.00. 1877 cent, ex. fine, \$11.00. Complete set Lincoln cents, uncirculated, \$83.00. 1793 half-cent, very fine, \$27.00. 1794 half-cent, Gilbert No. 3, very fine, \$17.50. 1851 U. S. \$20 gold, very fine, \$44.00. 1907 U. S. \$20 gold St. Gaudens design, high relief, unc., \$57.50. 1801 U. S. \$10 gold, ex. fine, \$41.50. 1904 Lewis-Clark gold dollar, unc., \$16.25. 1861 Confederate half-dollar, restrike, \$19.00. 1795 cent, thick planchet, lettered edge, v. fine, \$13.00. 1912 nickel S. mint, unc., \$16.00. 1874 pattern 20-cents, A-W. 1385, proof, \$26.00. 1864 gold dollar, unc., \$41.00. 1875 gold dollar, brill., proof, \$176.00.

Recollections of an Old Collector

By THOMAS L. ELDER

Pulse of the Coin Market

Are coins looking up? I'll say so. A dealer wrote me recently that he just sold a collection of Russian Platinum coins, only one kind of coins, for \$8,250. He added: "Another has just paid me \$2,500 cash for U. S. coins." He sold a "washlady" dollar for \$150, and a "Schoolgirl dollar" for the same price. Newcomer paid \$500 apiece for the same pattern dollar 25 years ago. The seller was Edgar H. Adams, now deceased. Good records are reported.

A late high in small cents is \$6 for an ordinary 1858 cent, uncirculated; this is over catalog price according to the last supplement to the price list, which lists, not buying prices but selling prices, the same as the stamp catalog. A new catalog is coming out September 1, with greatly advanced coin prices.

Quite a few unusual coins have come onto the market and are being snapped up by collectors. A "naked bust, Washington cent of 1797" was sold recently for a tidy sum, also a British Settlements in Kentucky token in silver, 1796, the latter, a specimen the writer hadn't heard of since the Gschwend sale in 1908. The latter is one of the most beautiful of the colonial half pence and it was, no doubt, made in England. Some of the big dealers have been doing some tall buying of coins lately, according to reports. As Mr. Proskey said, "All U. S. proof coins are rare."

Some Remarkable Medals of George Washington

As dynasties, kings and princes fall, as presidents and politicians rise, and disappear, the name of Washington shines with undimmed lustre. He was, in my opinion, the greatest personality of all time, for he saved a great country from inevitable defeat in the Revolution. He was, in fact, called "the soul of the Revolution," a shining beacon among that band of heroic men who steadfastly endured for those awful eight years between 1775 and 1783, with final triumph at Yorktown. There were many others, who also shone with great lustre: the Starks, the Paul Reveres, Ethan Alens, Patrick Henrys, Col. John Laur-

ens, Alexander Hamiltons, Warrens, Prescotts, General Greenes, Anthony Waynes, and so on. Towering above all was Washington, the dignified, the resolute, the patient, the most exemplary figure in our history.

Medals began to be awarded to him almost from the start of the Revolution. The one described entirely in French with an anonymous portrait and armorial bearings, seems to have been the earliest. Others followed by Manly, Twigg; there was the large coin series, which mostly emanated from England, the pattern half dollar by Getz of Pennsylvania, and many others in close succession. Baker in his monumental work lists 651 different medals, tokens and mules struck to honor Washington. This covers a period only up to 1885, and that was 58 years ago. Since then, hundreds of other Washington medals and tokens have been issued. I am mentioning only a few distinct varieties. Among the early ones comes the

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"Unity States Cent," which like others of the time bore little resemblance to Washington in their portraits. Some think this one came from France, but that seems doubtful in view of the well engraved English style, though the words "Unity States" seems a concoction of some admirer's imagination. There was a token called "Washington the Great," issued by some other worthy with imperialistic leanings, who might have wanted to see Washington as king of America, as did Colonel Nicola, who wrote Washington from headquarters at Newburg suggesting that idea direct to him. The obverse of this token bears a curious and crude bust and the legend reads: WASHINGTON. THE. GREAT. D. G. (Dei Gratia), which smacks of royalty. The reverse bears a chain of 13 links, for the early states, each bearing the initial of one of the 13 original states on the central space. Only two are said to be known. One was in the Colonel Green collection, which came from the W. S. Appleton collection of Boston; the second is in the U. S. Mint collection. This curious token has no official origin of course, though how the mint got it is a mystery.

Another is the celebrated "Georgius Triumpho." The reverse has the goddess of Liberty standing behind a framework of 13 bars, beneath the legend "Voce Populi," (the voice of the people). There was also the "Non Vi virtuti vici" pictured in Crosby which I sold at the Gschwend sale in 1908 for \$300. Hillyer Rider, an old-time collector, was the purchaser.

The reverse bore a shield and "E. Pluribus Unum." The bust is in civil dress and has little resemblance to the head of Washington. There was the "Washington half cent," dated 1793, mentioned and shown by Crosby in his book on cents and half cents of 1793 — some doubt if it is genuine. Washington's bust is in uniform, with date 1793 beneath. Reverse half cent between laurel branches, tied by a bow; beneath is a fraction, "1/200" as shown on the half cents before 1800, and "United States of America." The edge reads "Two hundred for a Dollar."

Quite a few collectors would like 100 for a dollar, or even one. The writer has never seen this pattern. Only two are known; they are listed by Snowden, page 39, and by Bushnell, 1254. Not everyone knows there were pattern two and five-cent coins of the mint with heads of Washington. Until recent years these were obtainable for a few dollars. Not so today. During the Civil War, Brimelow, a druggist, at 432 Third Avenue, in New York, issued quite a series bearing the head of Washington; they were in two sizes and in several met-

als, including copper, brass, white metal and silver. The ones in silver are quite rare. William Brimelow of Elkhart, Ind., a relative, has shown an interest in these tokens. On others, Washington was called "The Firm Friend of Peace and Humanity," "Washington the Great and Good," "The Farmer of Mt. Vernon," "Great Washington Has Lived For You." The most unsightly and ugly Washington medal was by J. Manly, struck about 1790, at Philadelphia which shows a crude caricature bust. These are

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 Springfield-10, Mass.

often rare medals and tokens. Another small token with Washington's head, by Bale, had this legend. "To King Alcohol Not One Cent," a temperance token of 100 years ago. It is rare today; another calls him "True, wise and merciful."

Westwood was a contemporary engraver who made fair Washington medals. Another had the scene of the cherry tree episode, made famous by a historian who also wrote fiction when he concocted that cherry tree story. The token states, "I cannot tell a lie."

Washington's head adorns many of the award and school medals, also celebrations and military medals. Two of the most notable are the Siege of Boston and the celebrated C. C. Wright medal with the signing scene depicted on the reverse. The medals by DuVivier are patterned after Houdon's celebrated bust. During the Civil War, Lovett, the coin dealer, also made many Washington medals and tokens. These are of fair workmanship and are occasionally found today. One of the Civil War tokens showed the Washington statue, equestrian in style, in Union Square, New York City.

The name of Washington will always appeal to Americans. In these days, it is restful to think of Washington, of whom it was aptly said: "First in war, first in peace, first in the hearts of his countrymen." The numerous medals honoring him show that no other American so impressed the people of this country with his worth.

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WANTED: U. S., Foreign Gold, Silver, Copper Coins, CSA, Fractional, Obsolete Currency, Medals, Etc. Highest Cash Prices Paid for any quantity. Send 3c for Our Copyrighted Premium List, or List of Coins for Offer. — Bebee Stamp & Coin Company, 1180 East 63rd, Chicago, Illinois. s6027

WANTED FOR CASH: Michigan obsolete bank notes and scrip. — Harold L. Bowen, 818 Lawrence Ave., Detroit, Mich. o12753

WANTED: Coins for my collection. Write me before selling. — Chas. A. McLean, 36 Grove St., Asheville, N. C. s6882

WANTED: U. S. Half cents, Large cents, Indian Heads 1859 to 1878, 1908's, 1909's, Nickels 1885, 1886, 1912's. Dimes 1894, 1895's, 1896's, 1897's, 1916's, Quarters 1896's, 1901's, 1913's, 1919's, 1920's, 1921's, 1923's. — Albert Halbeck, 224-19 Edgewood Ave., Springfield Gardens, L. I. New York. o6008

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